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Ruling class debating

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CIA—Time to close the

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CIA 4.01 ASSASSINATIONS

ORCJ1 MAFIA

CIA 4.01 Domestic Spying

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New disclosures in the continuing scandals surrounding the Central Intelligence Agency are threatening to blow the lid off some of the organization's seedier activities.

Assassinations of foreign leaders, drug dealing, Mafia connections and the continuing surveillance of U.S. citizens were among the hot items making headlines last week as various congressional investigators scurried in and out of the White House in an effort to keep the explosive situation under control. Among the exposees were the following:

—The CIA throughout the 1960s was involved in attempted and actual assassination efforts aimed at foreign heads of state, reported Daniel Schorr of CBS News. While Schorr gave no names, the March 6 Washington Post quoted "reliable sources" saying that the plots were aimed at Fidel Castro of Cuba, Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic and Patrice Lumumba of the Congo. Other reports mentioned Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam and Francois Duvalier of Haiti. Lumumba, Trujillo and Diem actually were assassinated.

—The CIA has maintained a working relationship with the Mafia over the years, disclosed former aides of the late Robert Kennedy. The relationship covered the use of gangsters in the assassination schemes, deals protecting the drug trade and even small favors, like spying on the girl friends of mob figures.

THE ABZUG FILE

—The CIA included among the "at least" 10,000 Americans it has kept files on Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.). Abzug confronted CIA director William Colby last week both with the contents of her dossier, which she had obtained, and the fact that it had been kept up for nearly 20 years. "To find myself in your files is outrageous," she proclaimed, to which Colby replied, "A considerable amount of the material in your file should not be there." He conceded no ground, however, on the fact that the file was kept at all.

The struggle around the CIA is clearly bound up with the continuing contention among different monopoly financial groups within the U.S. ruling class. In part it represents the continuation of the conflicts which surfaced during the Watergate affair and the efforts of the Ford-Rockefeller administration to consolidate its grip on the executive branch by cleaning house of old Nixon allies.

BEHIND THE 'INQUIRES'

But just how much of the current spate of exposures are being initiated by the White House and how much is being pressed by its opponents in order to take advantage of the situation is not yet clear.

The aim of President Ford's "blue ribbon" panel on the CIA, headed by Vice President Rockefeller, is plain enough. Its purpose has been to purge the agency of anti-administration officials while limiting further exposures of the CIA's fascistic threat to the democratic rights of the American people.

The present inquiry, however, is being taken up by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence headed by Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho). Church in the past opposed both the Nixon administration and then-House Minority Leader Gerald Ford on Indochina policy. At present he has taken up the question of the CIA's assassination plots, but appears to be vacillating as to whether hearings on the subject should be made public.

"Sources close to the Senator," said the March 11 New York Times, "say he is concerned about embarrassment to the United States if details of the plotting become known." But several members of Church's committee, the Times also noted, "believe the public should have the right to decide if it would approve of the government's assassinating foreign leaders during peacetime as a matter of national policy."

What this latter comment indicates, since the "rights of the public" are hardly the real concern of any group of senators, is twofold. First, the policy of assassinating foreign heads of state is still operational, perhaps with specific targets presently in mind, and second, that at least one section of the ruling class disapproves of the policy, at least temporarily or in part.

The Ford administration is playing its cards cautiously. "The White House," said the Times, "appeared to be encouraging Mr. Church's committee to be the forum for an inquiry into assassinations." On the other hand the White House clearly wants those "hearings" behind closed doors and has even invoked the incantation of "executive

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aides of the Kennedys." It was March 10 New York Times when two former aides to Robert Kennedy, Adam Walinsky and Peter Edelman, revealed the CIA's connections with the Mafia and the joint attempts of both groups to assassinate Fidel Castro. Kennedy, said the two aides, told them the story after being outraged over a 1967 column by Jack Anderson suggesting that he had been in on the plot.

"I didn't start it," Kennedy reportedly said, "I stopped it." Kennedy added that both the CIA and the Mafia were involved and the Times also noted that "after the Castro revolution in 1959, the gambling casinos and other activities were shut down by the Cuban government and the Mafia allegedly worked closely with CIA operatives in providing intelligence, planning and other help for the Bay of Pigs invasion."

THE MAFIA IN INDOCHINA

The Times also expanded the connection and referred to Alfred McCoy's book, "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia." McCoy, the Times pointed out, wrote "that Corsican and American syndicate gangsters had become involved in the heroin trade from Laos, Burma and Thailand. He also wrote that such information was known to many officials of the CIA and that they had done nothing to stop such activities." McCoy even noted that Edward Lansdale, a top CIA official, said "some kind of truce" was worked out with the Mafia. The Times interviewed some CIA figures on its own and reported that the agency believed the "Southeast Asia drug trade was considered to be helpful to anticommunist forces."

Kennedy's aides said that the former senator first came across the "connection" in the 1950s when he was working as an organized crime investigator for the Senate. "He was out in Las Vegas," said Walinsky, "and a mobster told him, 'you can't touch me, I've got immunity.' He said, 'who gave you immunity?' and the mobster said 'CIA.' He went back and he checked and sure enough it was true. They had made a deal with this guy."

Asked why Robert Kennedy had not made this information public, the Times reported that Walinsky believed "the Senator, who was assassinated while seeking the presidential nomination in 1968, planned to take some corrective action toward the CIA if elected to the White House."

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